

**Neighborhood Networks**

**Monthly Conference Call**

**The Scoop on Revised START: Center Experiences**

**May 18, 2004**

Operator: Good afternoon, my name is Tina and I will be your conference facilitator.

At this time I would like to welcome everyone to the Neighborhood Networks monthly conference call.

All lines have been placed on mute to prevent any background noise. After the speakers' remarks, there will be a question and answer period. If you would like to ask a question during this time, simply press star, then the number one on your telephone keypad. If you would like to withdraw your question, press star then the number two on your telephone keypad.

Thank you. Ms. Schachter you may begin your conference.

Ms. Schachter: Thank you Tina. Good afternoon. Welcome to Neighborhood Networks conference call, "The Scoop on Revised START: Center Experiences."

Just so that we are all speaking the same language, the acronym "START" stands for "Strategic Tracking and Reporting Tool." With me today are Sylvia Benavides, Neighborhood Networks' Business Plan Coordinator, Peng Yan and Ling Chi, Neighborhood Networks Systems team members. Also on line with us are three guest speakers from Neighborhood Networks centers.

Before I introduce our guest speakers, let me remind you that this call will be recorded and a verbatim transcript will be made available on the Neighborhood Networks Web site, as will an audiotape. The Neighborhood Network's Web site can be accessed by going to [www.neighborhoodnetworks.org](http://www.neighborhoodnetworks.org).

I would now like to turn the call over to Silvia Benavides who will make some comments about the revised START and her experiences helping Multifamily Neighborhood Networks Center staff to complete and start business plans.

Ms. Benavides: Thank you Vickie. Good afternoon. Thank you for being part of this conference call. We hope that you learn a lot and that you're able to use the tool once this call is completed. Since the relaunching of the enhanced START in August 2003,

approximately 200 centers have used START to create or update their business plan. START is an essential tool for both new and established centers, helping them define and refine their mission. It also allows centers to modify their plan online whenever they want. The enhanced online tool makes creating and updating your business plan easier than ever before. It helps your center plan, develop, track, and evaluate your centers by operations, organizational performance, and local and national partnerships. Centers should begin to start the process by collecting the data called for in the *START Workbook and User Guide*. The START workbook helps centers gather information that they will input into START online.

The next phase after the collection of the data is to input it into START. My experience from talking to centers with START business plans has been that they are able to complete their online business plan within a couple of hours because they have used the START workbook to gather the information. That's one of the key components that help centers make the completion of START easier. The usefulness of START is endless. The phrase that we have, as you know, is "Work Smart, Use START." And if you have any questions or need help creating your business plan, you can call the Neighborhood Networks Information Line, at 888-312-2743.

Thank you.

Ms. Schachter:

Thank you Silvia. Now I'm pleased to introduce the three center staff that will share their experiences in completing START. Drema Durham Malone is with the Ralston Mercy Douglass House in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. She will be followed by Amber Smith, who works at Roswell's Neighborhood Online Learning Center in Roswell, New Mexico. Just as a point of information, Amber has a background in occupational therapy and in her capacity as service coordinator, she facilitates the medical and daily needs of senior residents. And our final speaker will be Laura Aranda, who is the computer lab director at Sister Mary Lucy Neighborhood Networks Center in Denver, Colorado. Prior to coming to Sister Mary Lucy Center, Laura worked in the planning and assessment department at Boulder Valley School District. Laura has attended college in Mexico where she received

her Computer Science degree from University of Morales State.

After our speakers finish, we will open up this conference call for questions. I would like to turn the call over now to Drema Durham Malone.

Ms. Malone:

Good afternoon. Primarily Silvia really summed up the Neighborhood Networks and the START business plan. Being a first time user in the START program, I found it to be very user-friendly. As Silvia stated, if you complete the workbook ahead of time, you can go in at any time and revise your information and you can do it based on the information that you have already collected from the workbook. Actually, the Neighborhood Networks Information Line, has also been a really good tool for me because with any questions that got back to me, usually within the same day, not the 24-hours that the hotline says. But most of the START questions, again, are very user-friendly. You don't have to guess what they are actually asking for; the information is really detailed. A problem that I did run into was, I'm not a financial person, and so I needed a lot of help with the budget information. They require a three-year budget so the Neighborhood Networks Help Center was very beneficial helping me to complete that information. But again, it was not a major deal or nothing that was really mind-blowing in completing the whole process. The only thing that I found to be, again, something that was difficult for me was anything that was financial. But the system in inputting is very user-friendly. You follow a step-by-step guide and it tells you exactly what information you put on which screen. It also helps you generate your report. You can go in at any time and edit or revise your report. And basically there's not much more that I can really give, per Silvia's comments, on how to use the system or what the system is really about. It's just a fancy tool that's really friendly to use.

Ms. Schachter:

Thank you Drema. I will now turn the call over to Amber.

Ms. Smith:

Hello, my name is Amber and I'm from Roswell, New Mexico.

I work with senior citizens so sometimes that makes it a little different from working with just the general public. One of my problems I had was, there are statistical questions, where they want

to know education level and ethnicity and stuff like that. They know want to know statistics for HUD I guess. But when I asked these, I made sure I explained to my residents that these are for, we're trying to get this money for a program for them, to help them, to give them something to do and then I asked them these questions about their education level and I still got some responses of "none of your business" because some people just don't want to come out with that.

The budgeting and the funds, I did have problems with that because I didn't understand why, after I figured out a budget, I had to figure out where the funds came from, I still don't understand why I had to figure out where the funds came from, but I got some help with that from my manager. She has asked for grants before. And she helped me a lot with that, but Silvia helped me a lot. Whenever I called she was right on it.

For short-term and long-term help with this, I have the book. The book gave me, it was a great help, with the short-term especially because I was able to put everything into it and then just go back to the computer program and go ahead and input all the information I got. And it took me just like one working day to get it all input.

It also gave me a lot of examples in the book and online, when you go to those certain pages, it tells you like the different organizations that you might be able to contact and get help from. So this did help me to realize what is in my community that can benefit my residents in our program.

It also helped me with long-term. The book also helped long-term because of the budgeting and the goals that we are setting for the residents in the program. The budgeting made you go like three years, made you do a three-year budget, so that helps for long-term.

Day-to-day operation: The best thing about that is the goal setting. When we set goals then we're going to know what exactly we want to do, what exactly we're looking for every day that we're in the program, every day that we're working in our center.

Some advice that I would want to give to anybody who is going to

be using this is use the book. The book is just a really---it really helps and it saved a whole lot of time and it gave me everything that I needed right then and I was able to just work on it right there. And have somebody around that can help you, or if you don't have anybody around, just call; make sure you use the Neighborhood Networks Hotline with Silvia and that was just a great help for me.

And that's really all I have to say.

Ms. Schachter: Thanks so much Amber.

Ms. Smith: Thank you.

Ms. Schachter: And our final speaker will be Laura Aranda.

Ms. Aranda: Good afternoon everyone.

I would like to start with a brief introduction to describe how I visualized the Strategic Tracking and Reporting Tool. I can see that as a well-defined tool to help new Neighborhood Network Centers in developing a business plan and to help existing Neighborhood Networks centers on updating their business plan in an easy way. It better allows you to plan your center operations based on your evaluation response and your program tracking. I know that planning might be a hard process and putting the information into an online tool might sound more complicated for Neighborhood Networks center stuff, but once you start working with this tool, believe me, you will find this stuff is made easier.

For those that haven't started yet, I'm sure there might be some questions going through your mind such as "How do I start?" and "What are the benefits of using it?" Well, the first thing I'll say and probably the most important thing is that definitely to start working on the workbook and then to collect the information before you enter it into START online. This will make you to stop and take some time to think about what are your center operations and who are the people and resources involved in making your center possible. Basically, working in the workbook, will give you a clear picture of your center's life. If your center is not open yet, going through this first will be fundamental to go through the

process and think about your center's mission, the people you will be serving and what program and services you will be offering. In general, you will think about the center you would like to make.

In both cases, either creating new or existing centers, the workbook will take you step-by-step to collect and complete the information. I would like to open a parenthesis in terms of collecting the information and to be more specific in collecting the property and center demographics information. I would like to recommend that you apply a survey to your community residents. This is extremely important to consider that participants will be using your center. The surveys are very useful and the information will help you to determine the demographic makeup of your property and the center as well as to identify your user needs. Based on the survey, there are so many resources you can plan on creating new programs or improve existing ones operating in your center. Once you have completed collecting the information in the workbooks, you will have a clear idea of what your goals are and how you are going to work to reach them. Then you are ready to continue with the next step and go to the Neighborhood Networks Web site to open an account and start entering your center's information. It shouldn't take you more than a couple of sessions to learn how to use the online tool. It is a friendly system and well the best thing is that if you have questions, you can always call the Neighborhood Network Information Center to speak with a technical assistance specialist.

I would like to share with you that using this power tool helps your center in establishing annual programs and determine their goals as well as assigning them to the staff members that will be responsible for them. This tool gives us the space to list our program activities chronologically organized. With this tool we will review our program progress and we will make the necessary adjustments to reach our goals. At the end of the current fiscal year we will evaluate the results and we'll compare it then with our program expectations.

With the START tool, we went through most of the aspects to be considered when planning an existing center. We got sufficient information to develop our center operations timeline. It was a useful tool on generating our center's budget. It estimated the

ongoing cost of our center's operations as well. The START tool has a feature that allows you to submit your business plan to HUD coordinators and to generate your business plan report. This way coordinators can comment on and approve business plans online. This improves communication between HUD coordinators and Neighborhood Networks centers. But I can see there is a good opportunity to exchange information about your center and this also leaves an open door for others to see the work you're doing to achieve your center's mission. Another advantage, as Silvia Benavides mentioned, is that access to your information is fast and easy. You can do it at any time, from any location with a computer that has Internet access. So please then, use the opportunity to manage your business plan with these efficient tools, even if there are no two centers alike.

Finally I would like to close my participation with an invitation to Neighborhood Networks centers that haven't started using the START tool. Take a minute to evaluate all the benefits you will obtain by implementing your center's business plan with this tool and start working on it as soon as you can. I'm sure this will make your life much easier.

That's about all that I have.

Ms. Schachter:

Thank you so much Laura.

Now that all of you have been able to hear from three center users who appear to be very satisfied with the START tool, we'd like to open up this conference call to questions.

Operator:

At this time I would like to remind everyone, if you would like to ask a question, please press star then the number one on your telephone keypad. We'll pause for just a moment to compile the Q&A roster.

Your first question comes from the line of Sonya Manners.

Ms. Manners:

Hi, I have a question. I'm here not by myself, but I have another young lady with me that is looking to start up centers and our first question is about the budget. How do you project the three-year budget if you're a new center with basically no funds? And if you



are an existing center, how did you project and you've already started calculating that budget out for three years? Just trying to figure out how to come up with the numbers.

Ms. Schachter: Would any of our presenters like to respond to Sonya's question?

Ms. Aranda: Well, I'll be happy to answer that question. Once you start your budget for the first fiscal year, the system will estimate it for the next two years. It will raise your budget in about, you can say it's 2% or 5%, so it will help.

Ms. Schachter: Sonya?

Ms. Manners: Yes?

Ms. Schachter: Another thing is that it's important to recognize what your costs are and be able to list them out and then to cost out realistically. There's no substitute for that kind of grunt work in budget development. And START is a really great tool, but it's not going to be able to tell you how much a desk costs, or how much a chair is going to cost, or good lighting or things like that. So it's helpful to get cost estimates, either from vendors in your community or to call some other centers in your region and find out what their costs are for similar items. Ee could certainly link you up with some other centers in your region where the costs might be the same.

Ms. Manners: In addition to that question, now I know like desks and stuff like that will be in the startup costs. But when you do that and you put that figure in there, it goes over a three-year projection.

Ms. Benavides: This is Silvia. What you can do is you can go ahead and delete the other costs for the other years.

Ms. Manners: Oh, so you can actually take that cost out of the other two years.

Ms. Benavides: That's correct.

Ms. Manners: Okay.

Ms. Benavides: It will automatically calculate it for you. But if you don't want it, you can always go and click on the box for that particular year and

delete it.

Ms. Manners: Oh, okay, I didn't try that.

Ms. Benavides: And I also wanted to add that, in terms of not having enough funding or money to run your center, I mean, you can project maybe some potential funding that you may get from maybe fund-raising or in grants or whatever. You may want to do for the years, if you're trying to raise money to run the center, you can always make a projection for that.

Ms. Manners: So the budget is not an "etched in stone." It's something that you're projecting, not something that is actually there.

Ms. Benavides: Exactly.

Ms. Manners: I think that helps the questions that we had. Thank you.

Operator: Your next question comes from the line of Carol Zander.

Ms. Zander: Hi, how is everybody today? I'd like to ask, the advantages to the people involved, the stakeholders, are pretty obvious as far as the residents and the owners. But how do we entice business people to become involved as partners?

Ms. Schachter: Well, the START tool is designed to have center users, such as yourself, look at various stakeholders and what the benefits are to those stakeholders. One of the stakeholders that we frequently overlook when we're in the helping professions or in the human services professions are businesses. Businesses have a vested interest in making sure that low-income people are no longer low income but become working class or moderate income. The more money that people have, the happier businesses are because the more money people have in their pocket, the more likely they are to have more money for discretionary spending.

Ms. Zander: That makes sense.

Ms. Schachter: And in good economic times, and God willing we'll be back in good economic times soon, in good economic times employers are always looking to recruit workers. And so it's in their best interest

that there be trained, motivated people to fill their recruitment needs. So again businesses should have a vested interest in helping centers help adults in the community enter the world of work. And, finally, for the workers of the future, who are our youth today, businesses would have a vested interest in making sure the youth who live on our property get all the help that they need so that they can become properly motivated. I mean, I can see three selling points to solicit businesses right there.

Ms. Zander: Okay, my community is kind of limited. It's all disabled and we really don't have any youth here; however, I can certainly see how the economic aspect would be something they would be interested in.

Ms. Schachter: Right, and you can also tie in with some statistics. If there are people with disabilities on your property who want to be employed in the community, there are a number of resources that provide research and statistics about the retention of people with disabilities in the workforce. People with disabilities have longer retention rates than others. They are generally very loyal workers and they provide an inspirational and motivational presence to others around them.

Ms. Zander: That's a big help, thank you very much.

Ms. Schachter: You're welcome.

Operator: Your next question comes from the line of Kathy Posey.

Ms. Posey: Hello. My question is, I have tried for the last week-and-a-half to actually get into the START tool and, as a matter of fact, I just finished trying again. And it will never pull it up.

Ms. Benavides: What browser are you using?

Ms. Posey: Internet Explorer.

Ms. Smith: Do you have any special tools on your computer?

Ms. Posey: No, I mean, it comes up to the Neighborhood Networks site and then the START tool, and then where you click on to start it, it will

never come up.

Ms. Smith: I know on my computer I ran into a problem, Silvia remembers. We had a ghost on our computer that surfs and makes sure nothing gets in. I don't know exactly how it works, but that was keeping me from getting on. It's the little things, the McAfee, the firewalls and stuff like that. Those things are messing with programs sometimes. So you might want to look into that. Try it from a different computer and see if it works on a different computer.

Ms. Posey: Okay, thank you.

Peng Yan: I think it was from a special tool on your computer. How about this? After the conference call, we can save a lot of time. So we can call you or you can call us and we can walk you through to find out what exactly is the problem and help you solve the problem.

Ms. Posey: Okay that sounds great. I will give you all a call then. Thank you.

Operator: Your next question comes from the line of Laura Strobeen.

Ms. Strobeen: Good afternoon. I am calling regarding center demographics. And my question is, I have about twenty-five hundred non-residents registered at my learning center from the year 2000. But my problem is, we don't collect a lot of the information that is asked in the center demographics section of the START tool. Like we don't ask family head of household, we don't ask computer literacy levels, we don't ask what type of disabilities they have, so what do we do in that situation?

Ms. Schachter: Well, Laura, you might want to consider doing a one-time only survey. As people walk in, hand them a survey that contains at least some of the more critical demographic questions. They don't have to identify themselves and just give it to users during a particular period of time. You know, like during a ten or fourteen day period of time so that you can get a snapshot of your non-resident users. The reason it's important is that it's a way to help, as a planning tool and a way to address some of the unmet needs of some of these centers users. You really do need some of the demographics to get a sense of whether your program is meeting

the mark or not. But I would suggest an anonymous one-time-only walk in the door, please fill this out and drop it off on my desk as you leave kind of thing.

Ms. Strobeen: Right, because everybody who comes in does a registration form and we can change it to, you know, to add all of these questions in. And usually people don't have a problem when we tell them why we need the information. But my other question is like when you're asking for race or ages, does that have to equal 100%?

Ms. Schachter: No.

Ms. Strobeen: It doesn't? Because if I have like twenty-five hundred registered people but I only know the ages of fifteen hundred of them, then it doesn't have to equal 100%?

Ms. Schachter: Right, it doesn't.

Ms. Strobeen: And then that's another one of my problems is we use age groups. I've changed it now to date of birth in query out so I can get ages just recently, but before we were just doing age groups, like 0-12, 13-17, 18-50 and 50 and over. So do I guess on those things when I'm putting it in?

Ms. Benavides: I'm sorry, this is Silvia. You can just be as accurate as possible. I mean, it doesn't have to be exact on the form because sometimes centers have a different breakdown than what's in the tool. We just tell them to be as accurate as possible.

Ms. Strobeen: And see my thing is that since the year 2000 we've had twenty-five hundred people register at one of our learning centers and I'd like to reflect that, but I am willing to like, everybody who is registered in the year 2004, call them and ask these questions. But then it wouldn't give us the whole accurate number of what's happened since the day we opened or since the day, actually, that we started collecting the information. What would you suggest me doing in that regard?

Ms. Schachter: I don't think you really want a retrospective picture. I think you want demographics from this point forward.

Ms. Strobeen: Okay.

Ms. Schachter: So I think you should look at it current users rather than past.

Ms. Strobeen: So maybe just start calling the 2004 registrants and then collect information on them from here on out.

Ms. Schachter: If you want to do that or, as I said earlier, as they walk in the center to use the center, give them a brief survey.

Ms. Strobeen: They have to do that anyway, anybody who is new.

Ms. Schachter: Okay.

Ms. Strobeen: Okay, that helps a lot, thank you.

Ms. Schachter: You're welcome.

Operator: Again, in order to ask a question, please press star then the number one on your telephone keypad.

Your next question comes from the line of Jenny Alberts.

Ms. Alberts: Hello. I would like to know how I can get a list of all the centers around my area.

Ms. Benavides: You can actually go to the Web site, [www.neighborhoodnetworks.org](http://www.neighborhoodnetworks.org) and click on "Find a center" and you can get a listing for your area. You are calling from California?

Ms. Alberts: Yes, Los Angeles. So what's the web site?

Ms. Benavides: You can go and click on the map on California and you will get a listing and you can print it out from there.

Ms. Alberts: What would be the web site?

Ms. Benavides: [www.neighborhoodnetworks.org](http://www.neighborhoodnetworks.org).

Ms. Alverts: Okay. Is the Super Nofa, is that involved in this?

Ms. Benavides: No.

Ms. Alverts: Oh, okay, thank you.

Ms. Benavides: You're welcome.

Operator: You have a follow-up question from the line of Sonya Manners.

Ms. Manners: My question is on how can maybe the Census Bureau help you with any of your demographic information?

Ms. Schachter: That's a really interesting question Sonya. They have an awful lot of that demographic information, but it's usually broken out by zip code and then there's a sub-breakout from zip code. It's something smaller within each zip code. You could probably go online to the Census Bureau and see what the various listings are that they could provide. That would give you the whole neighborhood. I doubt if it would just give you your property though.

Ms. Shachter: Correct. It gives you the whole district.

Ms. Manners: I was saying maybe if we just did our district, you know, the city we're in but the district of the city that we're in, the township.

Ms. Schachter: That's a really good question. The Census Bureau has a tremendous amount of information.

Operator: Once again, in order to ask a question, please press star then the number one on your telephone keypad.

At this time there are no further questions.

Ms. Schachter: Well, I have a question. This is Vickie Schachter. We've had a number of people call and ask if they can define a fiscal in their own terms. So I'm going to ask Silvia if, when you're using START, whether you can just pick out any time to have a fiscal year or whether you have to begin on October 1 of a particular year?

Ms. Benavides: No, the fiscal year is already pre-defined. The timeframe for a

business plan is a period of three consecutive fiscal years. A fiscal year is a period beginning October 1 of a calendar year and ending September 30 of the following calendar year.

Ms. Schachter: So the answer is no. I can't just make up my own fiscal year.

Tina, do we have any other questions?

Operator: Your next question comes from the line of Greg Knudsvig.

Mr. Knudsvig: Hi Silvia.

Ms. Benavides: Hi, how are you?

Mr. Knudsvig: I'm wonderful.

Ms. Benavides: Good, good.

Mr. Knudsvig: Just a follow-up to that fiscal year piece. Our property is absolutely on a calendar fiscal year and all of our financial statements and data are done that way. Is there any reason we can't plug that in some way?

Ms. Benavides: Actually you can discuss that with your HUD coordinator.

Mr. Knudsvig: I also realized we could take a twelve-month period and use it starting with October 1 and just do it that way. That gets to be a little complex and it's not audited when you do it that way.

Ms. Benavides: Right, and you can do that.

Mr. Knudsvig: Yeah, okay, okay, thanks.

Ms. Benavides: You're welcome.

Operator: At this time there are no further questions.

Ms. Schachter: Okay. I have another question. We get a number of calls from organizations that are not Multifamily Neighborhood Network centers asking if they can use START. And we always tell them that they can certainly take a look at START and they can use it,



but should they do anything with START?

Ms. Benavides: They can use the tool. The only thing is that they can't submit it to HUD for approval. And if they can't submit it to HUD for approval they won't be able to do the annual assessment because it has to be approved before a center can, or someone that's using the tool, do an assessment online.

Ms. Schachter: Thanks Silvia.

Tina, are there any other questions?

Operator: Yes ma'am. Your next question comes from the line of Frank Fischer.

Mr. Fischer: Good afternoon. My question is the property demographics, and that's going to be pretty simple for me because we've got our senior facility here. The center demographics, are we to---as I begin with my committee to get this together, are we to estimate that at this time and that will be an evolving piece?

Ms. Schachter: Yes.

Mr. Fischer: Okay. So that's what I was assuming. Okay, thank you.

Operator: At this time there are no further questions.

Ms. Benavides: You indicate that there are over a thousand centers in the database. How are you prepared to handle all the calls that you may get regarding START?

Ms. Schachter: Well, there are some days where we're really quite busy talking with people on this toll-free line about various aspects of START and helping them. But we have dedicated staff and we are prepared to respond to any center that needs assistance with START. Our toll-free line is open from 8:30 to 5, Monday through Friday. And, as one of our speakers said, we generally can get---if you leave a message on the line because it's not during our business hours, we generally get back to you well before twenty-hours have elapsed. We're also available by fax and e-mail, if you have questions that are not of an urgent nature. Because there are

several of us who work on START so you should always feel free and not be hesitant to call and ask for assistance.

Ms. Benavides: And the number? The number is: 888-312-2743. So if you need any help with START, call us at that number and we will be able to assist you.

Ms. Schachter: Any additional questions Tina?

Operator: Yes, your next question comes from the line of Stephanie Hagemann.

Ms. Hagemann: Hello?

Ms. Schachter: Hello, you're on the line.

Ms. Hagemann: Oh, thank you. How do you get started or get the information to get started up with the Neighborhood Network and START?

Ms. Benavides: The first thing is you go to [www.neighborhoodnetworks.org](http://www.neighborhoodnetworks.org) and then you click on START, the business planning tool on your left and then click on START, then creation of a business plan.

Ms. Hagemann: Okay, creation of business plan.

Ms. Benavides: Yes, and when you get there you would have an option of clicking on your state and looking for your center. But since you haven't started, you go the bottom of that page where it says "request".

Ms. Hagemann: Okay, "request".

Ms. Benavides: Yes, you click there and a center profile form will pop up. You fill it in and hit submit.

Ms. Hagemann: Okay.

Ms. Benavides: And then it will get sent to us and we'll add it to the database and send you a notification via e-mail letting you know that your center profile has been added to the database and you can go back to "Create Your Business Plan" site.

Ms. Hagemann: Okay, thank you.

Ms. Benavides: You can call us if you need any help through that process.

Ms. Hagemann: Okay, thank you very much.

Operator: At this time there are no further questions.

I'm sorry; you do have a follow-up question from Frank Fischer.

Mr. Fischer: We're just getting this together. I'm actually developing a committee of residents and what we're doing is I've got at least one and in some cases two residents who are bilingual representing each language group in our facility. My question is, really to anyone out there, have you bridged this area yet in your program? Have you considered it and do you have any thoughts about, just any thoughts or comments that I might want to consider as I'm pulling this committee together?

Ms. Schachter: So your question, which you're putting out to other listeners is whether other centers have used resident committees to help develop their centers and, if so, how have those committees worked?

Mr. Fischer: Yes, and specifically, if they've addressed the area of English and non-English residents so that---one of our goals is going to be to foster better communication and kind of bring more cohesiveness to our community. And so I'm just wondering if anyone has resident committees yet and then if they're addressing the language barrier?

Ms. Schachter: Do any of our presenters care to respond to this question?

Ms. Malone: This is Drema. Currently we do have a resident committee. We started it with our tenant council and that's part of the committee that we use, but unfortunately it's not bilingual; it's just for English-speaking, the tenants that are on the committee so I haven't addressed the second part to his question.

Ms. Schachter: Okay, anybody else?

Operator: Your next question comes from the line of Jenny Alberts.

Ms. Alberts: Yes, I just want to say, when you have a resident and you want a committee that is mixed, the first thing that they have to do is that when we have our meetings we divide the people at the same table. The ones that speak English work from one side; the ones who speak Spanish work on the other side. And we have a person who translates for them. That's number one. And number two, we make sure that they come to the computer classes and we kind of mesh the English with the Spanish because a lot of these people, they do understand English, but they're afraid to speak. So we invite them to participate in the computer classes, we make sure that we sell them that a computer is a very easy tool, they don't need to be highly educated to learn the computers. And then once they get interested and then they really keep coming to the meetings.

I just wanted to tell the gentleman about it.

Ms. Schachter: Yes, thank you. Frank, does that respond to the issue you raised?

Operator: Frank, please press star one on your telephone keypad.

One moment please.

Ms. Schachter: Thank you.

Operator: Mr. Fischer, your line is open.

Mr. Fischer: Okay, great. Yes, that's helpful. I actually have six languages so it's going to be hard to bridge that, but I have a resident really excited about this and I think the idea of dividing the people up at the different tables is a pretty good idea. So thank you.

Ms. Schachter: You're welcome. Tina, are there any additional questions?

Operator: No ma'am, not at this time. Again, in order to ask a question, please press star one on your telephone keypad.

There are no further questions at this time.

Ms. Benavides: This is Silvia. I do want to add something, additional information. Based on the conversations with centers that have started the START process, now do you they need to go back to previous business plans and do one for the previous years? And my answer is that if you want to do that, if you want to enter that information you can, but you don't have to. Your business plan should reflect your current information and shouldn't have old information. If you have an old business plan, you should create a START business plan and input the current information instead.

Ms. Schachter: Thank you Silvia. Tina, are there any final questions?

Operator: No ma'am not at this time.

Ms. Schachter: Then I want to thank all of our speakers and thank our audience for tuning in today to hear about START. If you have any questions please call us on the toll-free line, 888-312-2743. And if you're interested in looking at START or beginning the START process, please go to our web site at [www.neighborhoodnetworks.org](http://www.neighborhoodnetworks.org). Thank you very much.

Ms. Benavides: Thank you.

Operator: Thank you. This concludes the Neighborhood Network's monthly teleconference. You may now disconnect. [END OF CONFERENCE CALL]